



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Eleven counties awarded grants to improve fairgrounds

OLYMPIA – The state Department of Agriculture has awarded \$100,000 in grants to eleven counties for capital improvements at county fairgrounds. Grant amounts ranged from \$2,308 to \$20,000 for projects that will eliminate safety and health hazards, bring facilities up to code, and replace a failing wastewater system. Counties receiving grants and the projects funded are:

County	Capital Project	Project Cost	Grant awarded
Clallam	Replace old, structurally unsafe shower building to meet ADA requirements.	\$55,000	\$14,232
Cowlitz	Install hot water hand washing facilities in three restrooms.	\$7,650	\$3,825
Grays Harbor	Build two portable hand washing stations to satisfy health department requirements.	\$5,037	\$2,500
Island	Replace arena fence to eliminate safety hazards.	\$22,271	\$11,135
Jefferson	Bring the multi-purpose building to code by replacing the roof.	\$36,000	\$10,000
Mason	Re-roof three buildings to eliminate health and safety hazards.	\$27,000	\$13,500
Douglas	Upgrade the restrooms to ADA compliance.	\$10,000	\$5,000
Pacific	Re-roof a portion of the commercial building to eliminate safety hazards.	\$4,709	\$2,308
Pend Oreille	Improve electrical service for the RV park to eliminate fire and electrical hazards.	\$20,000	\$10,000
San Juan	Replace failing wastewater system.	\$15,000	\$7,500
Wahkiakum	Replace old horse stalls to improve accessibility and safety.	\$61,412	\$20,000
Total		\$264,079	\$100,000

The one-time grant funds were made available by legislation passed earlier this year. Counties were limited to requesting a maximum of \$20,000 in grant funds for a capital improvement project. A total of 58 qualifying applications were received requesting nearly \$700,000 in grants for capital improvements that totaled \$5.1 million. Applications were reviewed by the department's seven-member Fairs Commission with priority given to applications for improvements that addressed a safety or health situation or a legal requirement.

MORE

Grants to fairgrounds — 2
Nov. 29, 2001

"The need for funds to help counties with capital improvements at fairgrounds is great," said Jim Jesernig, director of the Department of Agriculture. "Due to a reduction in funds available for the state's Agricultural Fairs program, we have not been able to provide funds for capital improvements since 1992."

Director Jesernig applauded State Senator Marilyn Rasmussen of Eatonville for her hard-fought campaign to get funds for fairs. "Without her diligence, this money might not have become a reality," he said.

The department expects to distribute the grant funds in early December so counties can move ahead quickly with their projects and complete the improvements by the start of the 2002 fair season.

The state's Agricultural Fairs program provides financial assistance to agricultural fairs and youth shows. In 2001, 70 area, county and community fairs and 4-H and FFA shows participated in the program receiving \$2 million in assistance.

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